

Jefferson Park Expansion

Public Involvement Summary

In 2000, Seattle voters approved the \$198.2 million Pro Parks Levy, including a project to expand Jefferson Park into the area occupied by the Beacon Reservoirs and to plan for park improvements throughout Jefferson Park.

Pro Parks Planning

The Jefferson Park Expansion Project is an outgrowth of many years of neighborhood planning to improve Jefferson Park. The improvement of Jefferson Park was a major component of the 1999 North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan. Between 2000 and 2002, a series of public meetings and a Project Advisory Team (PAT) helped craft the Conceptual Site Plan of 2002 which identified approximately \$30 million in improvements to Jefferson Park.

Schematic Design and Design Development

The Schematic Design Plan is the result of three public meetings, six Project Advisory Team meetings and many hours of design work. The designers worked closely with Parks staff, the Project Advisory Team and community members to create a plan that reflects the desires, needs and goals of park users and other stakeholders. The plan strives to create a neighborhood park with regional attributes that reflects local cultural and racial diversity.

Project Advisory Team

From September 2005 to May 2006 Parks staff and consultants met with the Project Advisory Team (PAT), which consisted of nine community members who volunteered to be part of the design effort. The PAT:

- re-affirmed some of the earlier direction that was part of the 2002 Conceptual Site Plan,
- updated staff on current thinking about use of open space, athletics, views and cultural values,
- prioritized the project elements that would be advanced into refined designs.

The PAT advised developing the park framework, including: major earthwork, entries, pathways, utility infrastructure, bathroom, turf grass, major tree plantings, and the separate sub-projects (tennis courts and play area).

Public Meetings

October 2005 – Parks introduced the project to the general public and gained additional feedback on low, medium and high priorities for park development to be funded as part of this project.

December 2005 – Based on feedback from the community, designers prepared more detailed plans that included the comfort station/restroom building, large gathering spaces, water features, sports field orientation and trees.

February 2006 — At the request of PAT members, Parks held a Saturday open house to receive input and viewpoints from those who do not normally attend public meetings at night. Comments from the community included requests for picnic areas, un-programmed open spaces, enhanced plantings, and additional comments reinforcing the conclusions from earlier planning for the park.

Pro Parks Levy

Other outreach

The Schematic Design Plan is on display at the Jefferson Community Center and the Beacon Hill Library which has enabled many more people to be informed about the progress of the project.

Seattle Park Board

The Seattle Park Board recommended approval of the Schematic Design to Superintendent Ken Bounds at the March 9, 2006 Park Board Meeting.

Final Design

The Jefferson Park Expansion Project will propose \$7.3 million worth of park features be constructed between 2007 and 2009. Most of the work is in the former reservoir land in the north central areas of the park and in the vicinity of Jefferson Community Center. The foremost feature of the “new” Jefferson Park will be expansive openness and the spectacular views of the city skyline, Puget Sound and Olympic Mountains. The main park elements in the final design include:

- Park entries that invite people into the park.
- Pathways to lead people around and through the new park areas with a network of paths including a wide promenade loop and smaller paths designed for different walking experiences.
- Paths leading to several viewpoints that take advantage of the spectacular northwest views.
- A play area for different age groups.
- A plaza to accommodate local events and incorporate reflections of the diversity of the neighborhood.
- Storm water will be addressed both functionally and as an amenity.
- Large open grass areas for a variety of activities ranging from family picnicking to soccer for little kids.
- Dedicated fields for soccer and baseball crowning the reservoir lid in the center of the park.
- The old utilities gate house building remodelled as a new comfort station with men’s and women’s restrooms.
- Two additional tennis courts to complement the existing courts and serve as replacement courts.
- A basketball court will be added to the existing court.
- Nine additional parking spaces at the community center.
- Pedestrian lighting on the loop promenade path and at entries.
- Environmental art.

Development of other park elements from Schematic Design will be considered as part of future phases.

Seattle Design Commission Recommendations

Parks staff and consultants met twice with the Seattle Design Commission in September and December 2005. At both meetings, the Design Commission members praised consultant The Berger Partnership for adhering to the previous Concept Plan from 2002. However, the commissioners were critical of the 2002 plan as being a collection of separate uses that satisfy a variety of constituents, but fails to provide a bigger vision. Their advice was to revise the 2002 plan to create a unified design plan. The Design Commission approved the final design in June 2006.

Current Status

The design of Jefferson Park will continue throughout the remainder of 2006 with the development of contract documents. Parks anticipates advertising for construction bids in the spring of 2007. Initial construction is likely to take place starting in the summer of 2007, with a second stage occurring in 2008-09 upon the completion of Seattle Public Utilities’ Beacon Reservoir Project.

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www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/JeffersonPark.htm